



Good Men's Women: Hume on Chastity and Trust

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Hume Studies Volume V, Number 1 (April, 1979), 1-19.

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GOOD MEN'S WOMEN: HUME ON CHASTITY AND TRUST

At the very heart of Hume's philosophy in the Treatise, namely between his discussion of the artificial and the natural virtues, he places a short chapter entitled "Of Chastity and Modesty." Its central position is appropriate, since these supposed virtues present something of a test case for Hume's account of the relation between nature and artifice, and, more generally, beyond his moral philosophy, for his views on regularity and constancy in and out of individual lives. For these theoretical reasons, as well as for the calm realism of his treatment of sexual inequality, the chapter warrants more attention than it has received.

Perhaps Hume's most important contribution to moral philosophy is his account of the difference between natural virtues, displayed in actions which do good one by one, each act having value independently of whether similar acts are performed by oneself and others on other occasions, and artificial virtues displayed in acts in essential conformity to established socially useful conventions, which do good only in so far as they are supported by general conformity. Hume does not, like Kant, insist that we always see morally good action as obedience to law, nor does he neglect the importance of those areas where good can be done only if acts are correctly seen as conforming to general laws, general conformity to which is not only willed by the agent but assumed by him to be in effect. Hume gives a subtle and elaborate account of when we do and when we do not need moral and social conformity, of which virtues are and which virtues are not mediated by changeable public will or convention. Conventions must operate before any act can count as property-respecting, but there is no need to ask 'can I will this as universal law?' before comforting a frightened child. Whatever the conventions, whatever others do, such an act does some good, and is the sort of

2.

act which displays the natural virtue of kindness.

Hume requires of a virtuous act not merely that it be helpful or agreeable to someone (or some public) but that it display a durable character trait in the agent. An uncharacteristic act of kindness to a child may do good without displaying a virtue or a good character. Approval is given, according to Hume, to persons on account of their durable character traits, as displayed in their actions and reactions. The natural response to virtue is to welcome its possessor: *His company is a satisfaction to me* (T588)¹, and virtue in rags will be the exception in a smoothly functioning society. The fact that Hume's ethics is an agent ethics, and that the concept of welcome virtue is more fundamental to it than that of a useful action, commits Hume, throughout his moral philosophy and especially in his treatment of the natural virtues, to an emphasis on consistency or integrity of character, to a search for durable character traits and so for characteristic actions.

Now a person might be characteristically kind, yet on occasion, under stress, give expression to unaccustomed malice. The uncharacteristic malicious act may weaken but not destroy the virtue of kindness which kind acts have both expressed and *infixed* (T411). When the malicious act is known, the person's reputation for benevolence may be slightly sullied, but certainly not ruined. Both within one person's life, and within one population, there will be reason to encourage consistently virtuous action, but no reason to feel that all is lost or spoiled if lapses from the natural virtues occur. Even when cruelty is the norm, the rare kind act may be appreciated, if not rewarded, the rare kind person may be welcome, if also exploited and victimized.

With the artificial virtues there is a stronger demand and need for uniformity in a population, since the value of any one just act, or one person's character trait, depends upon the support received from the similar acts and

traits of others. *Every single act is performed in the expectation that others are to perform the like* (T498). To display artificial virtues, actions must be seen as rule governed, and the rule must be *inflexible either by spite or favour* (T502). The generality required for the utility of an artifice is impersonal and interpersonal. It would seem to matter little whether the few lapses, the inevitable small cracks in the *vault* (E305) of justice, be spread across many lives or concentrated in the lives of a few unjust individuals. Does it matter, to the victims of theft, if the thieves be many or a few very busy ones?

Where it surely does matter not only how many lapses occur but how many non-virtuous persons there are is where reputation is affected and relied on, since the more dishonest people there are known to be, the more restricted are the opportunities for cooperation. As Hume's account of them makes clear, all the artificial virtues are displayed in cooperative action, requiring trust, which is protected by the fact that reputations are at stake in such action. Where we count on others, we also keep account of their performance. It is more important to know others' reputation for the artificial virtues than for the natural virtues, since in cooperating with others we make ourselves vulnerable to their lapses from artificial virtue, as an animal bears its throat to inhibit fatal attack. Both natural goods and reputation are deliberately put in jeopardy in the cooperative ventures which alone provide opportunity for display of artificial virtues and vices. To display kindness or cruelty, I need not first be trusted by another, but to show fidelity or infidelity to promises I must first have been included in the circle of trusted ones with whom another will have *any commerce* (T521, T583). A bad reputation will effectively exclude me from the society of those who have opportunity to display artificial virtues or vices. Lapses from artificial virtues, unlike lapses from natural virtue,

4.

are always breaches of trust. If I show myself untrustworthy, I will *never be trusted any more* (T522).

All the artifices extend or create a climate of trust in a variety of areas by altering presumptions concerning trustworthiness. Before the artifice of property, the presumption would be that transferable possessions cannot be left in another's safekeeping. Once there are rules of property, this presumption is reversed. Before the artifice, a person might be trusted because of special position to one, say parent or lover, or might earn trust by proven conspicuous trustworthiness; after the adoption of the artifice trust on some matters is extended to all, on credit, and it is distrust which must be individually earned. In a society where trust is extensively eroded, it is perhaps difficult to realize how social conventions do make trustworthiness the normal expectation. But even in a distrustful society like the United States where gunsmiths and locksmiths prosper, most of us still walk abroad unarmed, trust our property to tenants and repair workers, trust our lives and health to airplane pilots, bus drivers, doctors, suppliers of food and water. No doubt we do so with increasing risk, but the alternative, increasing distrust, brings an evil worse than risk of individual loss, namely that pervasive climate of distrust which Hobbes correctly called "Warre, and such a warre as is of everyman against everyman."² Better to be trusting fools than distrusting war-makers.³

The fact that existing societies differ in their climate of trust shows an important fact about the artificial virtues which Hume's account does not point up, namely that a reputation for honesty is quite compatible with known limitations on the scope of that honesty. In the United States, but not in New Zealand, a person may count as honest who observes the maxim "finders keepers." Standards of honesty vary, and awareness of this fact introduces the concept of degrees of honesty into our assess-

ment of our fellows. In writing testimonials we will describe some as scrupulously honest, others merely as honest. A person may have a reputation for being more or less honest, honest in all matters except turning in money found in public places, or except in income tax returns. A person does not lose a reputation for honesty because of acknowledged limits to it. Some limits are built in to the convention itself, and it may be that in this society careless owners and internal revenue departments are by tacit agreement accepted as fair game for takers. But there are always areas of uncertainty and room for discretion, and a person's character will be judged by behaviour in this grey zone.

There is, of course, a difference between acknowledged limits to the field within which a person's, or a population's, honesty operates, and acknowledged lapses within this field. In practice, however, it is difficult to decide whether, for instance, a person's failure to correct a mistakenly high insurance claim submitted on her behalf shows that insurance companies are beyond the pale, for her, or whether, due to unusual temptation, there was a lapse from standards usually applied *inflexibly by either spite or favor* (T502). I think we can grant Hume's claim that artificially virtuous acts do depend, for their worth, on dependable consistency of behaviour not only within a life but within a population more than do naturally virtuous acts, without denying that the artificial virtues can admit of degrees, of limitation of range, and of occasional lapses. A formal feature of all the artificial virtues, as Hume presents them, is that one lapse destroys the virtue. This fragility of an artificial virtue links with the role of the artifices in securing trust and enabling cooperation. I have so far argued that, granted that the artifices have this vital role of altering presumptions concerning the trustworthiness of persons in particular matters (can I trust my possessions

6.

to him, can I trust his word, can I count on his allegiance?) and granted that the artificial virtues are more fragile than the natural virtues, nevertheless they are not so fragile that one lapse is fatal to their survival in a person. They may not survive unharmed, but survive they may, and their reflection in reputation may register both the limits of a person's virtue's reach and any recorded lapses within that field. One blot on one's copy-book need not destroy reputation nor condemn one to social ostracism.

The artificial virtues, then, are more like chastity, as it is normally understood, than like virginity -- they are not so fragile as to be destroyed by one lapse. But when Hume, after considering the special freedom granted to princes, turns to the special restriction placed on women, when he turns to consider chastity, he treats it as conceptually analogous to virginity, an all or nothing affair, an inviolate state of a person not yet seduced into ruin. This is because the trust he associates with the virtue is trust concerned with guarantee of paternity. The vital determination of which children are one's own cannot be made by the male parent unless he trusts the female, and trusts her exclusive attachment to him, by Hume's account. Strictly, the exclusive attachment is needed only during a limited period, if the rationale is the one Hume gives. There is no conceptual reason why chastity should not be merely month-long exclusive sexual fidelity, and the reputation for it lost only by known switches of sexual partner within any one period of possible conception. Hume does not consider this, but had he done so, he could have explained the exaggeration of the demand for chastity, in relation to its rationale, in the same way he does for modesty, namely the human tendency to carry general rules beyond the *original principle* (T573) especially when that principle goes against a natural tendency. We must shoot beyond the target to hit the

target. A more general restriction may be less likely to be critically examined by its victims than one of such baroque complexity that they are encouraged to probe for a rationale. Practicality demands a simple rule, where there is any case for a restriction. Hume says that if the rule made an exception for women past the age of child-bearing *the example of the old would be pernicious to the young and ... women, continually foreseeing that a certain age would bring them the liberty of indulgence, would naturally advance that period, and think more lightly of this whole duty, so requisite to society* (E208).

In determining which children are one's own there is inequality of need for trust, since no mother need depend on another person to determine which child is her child. *From this trivial and anatomical observation is deriv'd that vast difference betwixt the education and duties of the two sexes* (T571). By Hume's account the male needs to know which children are his children more than does the female, since he is expected not merely to *give a loose to love and tenderness* but also to *undergo cheerfully all the fatigues and expences* (T570 emphasis added) of child care. He also wants to ensure that his property is not passed on to a *wrong object* (*ibid.*), by Hume's earlier account of the 'natural' right of succession (T510ff). The female parent may trust the male to share the *fatigues* of child care, but by Hume's account it is the males who are most vulnerable to breach of trust, who are forced into trust, by that lack of *security* concerning which *objects* are *their own*, due to the fact that since, in the copulation of the sexes, the principle of generation goes from the man to the woman, an error may easily take place on the side of the former, tho' it be utterly impossible with regard to the latter (T571).

Hume's account of the demand for female chastity depends upon his psychological premises that men will be unwilling to care for children not believed to be bio-

logically their own, as well as on his epistemological and "anatomical" premisses concerning the natural uncertainty of paternity. It also depends upon an assumption made but not stated, namely that a society be both patriarchal, so that control of "expences" is in male hands, and patrilineal, so that property passes through the male line. In a matriarchal and matrilineal society the question of true paternity would become as "trivial" as the anatomical facts which make error there so easy.

Another suppressed premiss in Hume's account is that a double standard operate not only between the sexes, but within the female sex also. Although Hume says that special restrictions are imposed *over the whole sex* (T573), his account requires that there be some women available as partners for those *debauch'd batchelors* (T572) and straying husbands who are granted a greater *liberty of indulging their appetites in venereal enjoyment* (T573). As Hume knew very well, neither the servant women at Ninewells nor the royal mistresses of Paris aspired to be mothers of children of recognized lineage and title to property, so could afford to risk *bad fame* (T571) by their *lewdness and impudence* (T572). His contemporary, Bernard Mandeville, is very clear on this point: "If courtezans and strumpets were to be prosecuted with as much vigour as some silly people would have it, what locks and bars would be sufficient to preserve the honour of our wives and daughters.....it is manifest that there is a necessity of sacrificing one part of womankind to preserve the other, and prevent a filthiness of a more heinous nature."⁴ Hume knows and by implication recognizes these simple truths, but his emphasis in the chapter "Of Chastity and Modesty" is on the role of the artificial virtue of chastity in persuading males to share responsibility for child-rearing, and the preparation of all women for their childbearing role. He sees clearly that the heart of the problem concerns the role of childbearing, the

responsibility for child-rearing, the unalterable division of the labor for the former, the socially contrived division of responsibility for the latter, and the complicating thread of trust tying the sexual parties together in different sorts of dependency.

Hume's chapter is sometimes perceived, and was earlier perceived by me, as sexist in tone and content, but now I find it remarkable for its devastating clarity, its exposure of the double standard as a "useful" means of indulging the vanity of socially powerful males, and as a response to their reluctance to share the costs of child-bearing, their stinginess or *confined generosity* (T495) in assumption of responsibility for new members of society. Hume does not minimize the costs of the artifice to women. Unlike Mandeville, he does not see the drive for sexual pleasure as originating only in the males. *The principle of generation* may go from the man to the woman, but the pleasure principle is seen as operating as or more strongly in females than in males: *All human creatures, especially of the female sex, are apt to overlook remote motives in favour of any present temptation: the temptation is here the strongest imaginable...* (T571). Some readers of Hume may find these words evidence for rather than against his sexism, but it ought to be noted that Hume's ideal for human beings is not a preference for remote interest over contiguous agreeable pleasure, but an alignment of the two. Hedonistic indulgence is no worse a fault, on his account, than cold calculation of interest, neglect of the agreeable for the useful. Throughout the Treatise, in Book Two in the section on *the amorous passion* in Book Three in his account of sexual union as *the original principle* (T486) of human society, of the natural family as the forerunner of artifice-secured societies, in the nice reverse sexism of his account of the natural virtue of being what *we call good women's men* (T614), as well as in the section on chastity and modesty, Hume shows himself in his writings,

as he did in his life, remarkably free of discriminatory sexism. Even his failure to note the socially contrived condition of patrilineal succession as a needed background for the virtue of female chastity is only a local failure. Elsewhere⁵ he showed considerable awareness of and interest in that convention, an awareness helped by his high esteem for his mother, and by the fact that her sex prevented her from inheriting the Falconer family title.

Hume considers the demand for female chastity so unnatural, the difficulty of combatting natural desire so great, that the artifice of chastity needs the supplementation of the sister virtue of modesty. Fear of *bad fame* for lapses from chastity is insufficient as a motive; a woman may still *flatter herself she shall find certain means of securing her reputation and preventing all the pernicious consequences of her pleasure. 'Tis necessary, therefore, that besides the infamy attending such licenses, there shou'd be some preceding backwardness or dread...* (T571-2). Modesty prepares the way for chastity, and Hume presents it as a socially approved deformation, like Chinese foot-binding. Here Mandeville is more explicit than Hume: "Miss is scarce three years old but she is spoke to every day to hide her leg, and rebuked in good earnest if she shows it, while little master at the same age is bid to take up his coats and piss like a man."⁶ Hume emphasizes the exaggeration of the demand for modesty in relation to its rationale: *Men have undoubtedly an implicit notion that all those ideas of modesty and chastity have a regard to generation...yet the general rule carries us beyond the original principle and makes us extend the notion of modesty over the whole sex, from their earliest infancy to their extremest old age and infirmity* (T573).

Hume regards it as *so obvious* (T570) that female chastity and exterior modesty have no foundation in nature (ibid.) that he says any doubts his reader may have

concerning his general thesis that some virtues depend upon useful artifices will be removed by a consideration of modesty and chastity. These, he says, are *still more conspicuous instances of the operation of those principles which I have insisted on (ibid.)*. Here Hume is in error. Conspicuous instances of artificial contrivance though they may be, they are also counter instances to three important ingredients in the principles Hume insisted on in his treatment of the main artificial virtues, honesty, fidelity to promises, and loyalty. Firstly, they were claimed to be dependent on *obvious and absolutely necessary artifices* (T484), and so to be *as natural as anything which proceeds immediately from original principles, without the intervention of thought or reflexion* (T484). No such claim is made for chastity and modesty, which are presented as useful but dependent upon highly unnatural, not natural, social contrivances. Chastity is vaguely related by Hume to *fidelity to the marriage bed* (E206) and so to fidelity to promises, but it is not reducible to a special case of that, since the obligation of chastity is supposed to lie on all women, regardless of the particular content of promises they have made. This inflexible⁷ unvarying requirement leaves room for choice only with respect to which male shall be the one sexual partner, and so contrasts with the adaptability of promise, which is *warp'd into as many different forms as that (social) interest requires* (T524). Voluntary binding of oneself by a promise is a natural artifice; but the nonvoluntary other-imposed obligations of modesty and chastity are portrayed by Hume as contrary to nature, as the *forced backwardness to the approaches of a pleasure, to which nature has inspir'd so strong a propensity; and a propensity that 'tis absolutely necessary in the end to comply with, for the support of the species* (T572). There may be a *sense of common interest* (T490) lying behind recognition of this virtue, but it is not a sense of equal interest.

The second difference between chastity and other artificial virtues is that they involve a motive, avidity, which corrects itself by artifices,⁸ since *there is no passion...capable of controlling the interested affection, but the very affection itself by an alteration of its direction* (T492). By contrast the sexual appetite is not a self-correcting passion, but is corrected, on Hume's account, by independent motives, concern that one's children receive paternal recognition and inheritance. Concern for the "support of the species" is not what corrects sexual desire. What corrects it is male vanity and lack of generosity, female concern for reputation, and the concern of both sexes for the recognition and privilege of those individual members of the species who are biologically "their own". The whole reproductive process in the species may correct itself, but in individuals sexual appetite and parental concern are separate passions.

Thirdly, the artificial virtues of chastity and modesty are unlike the others, in Hume's treatment of them, in the emphasis given to the importance of individual constancy of behavior, as distinct from constancy in a population. Up until this point in Part II of Book Three Hume had emphasized the need for general consistency of behavior within a population if artificial virtues are to merit recognition, and so, since their existence, unlike that of the natural virtues, depends upon recognition, if they are to exist at all. Related to this demand for general consistency, but not very clearly or persuasively related, is his emphasis on individual reputation for intra-life consistency, or virtue, and on the risk of losing it by a single theft, breach of contract, or treacherous act. When he turns to chastity the spotlight is on individual spotless life-long reputation, not on consistency within a population. Indeed, as I have shown, for Hume's account of the rationale for a special demand for chastity imposed on women but not men to work at all, he assumes

that a convenient number of the female population will be immodest and unchaste. The modesty and chastity of mothers of sons of wealthy males may be useful to those males but are conspicuous counter instances to the claim that I *should be the cully of my integrity if I alone shou'd impose upon myself a severe restraint amidst the licentiousness of others* (T535). The licentiousness of other women will not only not diminish the point of the virtuous wife's "fidelity to the marriage bed," if that point is assurance for the husband of his paternity of her children, but will be depended upon to relieve her from the importunities of those "debauch'd bachelors" and straying husbands who make up the male population, by Hume's account. It is not consistency in a population which is emphasized in the "rationale" Hume gives of chastity, but consistency within an individual life. If the point of the virtue is assurance of true paternity, then "fidelity to the marriage bed" can be as decisively destroyed by one lapse as can virginity. Hume shows some uneasiness over the correct classification of these virtues by his inclusion of "fidelity" in a list of natural virtues at T603. This cannot be fidelity to promises, which is definitely an artificial virtue, nor surely is it chastity. Some more primitive and nondiscriminatory virtue, fidelity to an informal understanding between lovers which "unites them and preserves their union" (T486) may be the natural virtue which has one formal feature Hume requires of chastity, namely that one lapse destroys it by destroying trust.

That some such mutual fidelity is a Humean virtue is clear from his references to the virtue of constancy in friendship, along with the fact that his opposition to divorce, in his later essay, is grounded in part on his belief that friendship is the chief element in marriage. He opposes divorce not merely because of its supposed ill effects on children and on the birthrate, but because *the marriage knot...chiefly subsists by friendship* (LMP107),

and friendship thrives under constraint and requires an expectation of permanence. If there is to be this great good of friendship between husband and wife, some sort of fidelity will be essential, whether or not it be that exclusive sexual fidelity Hume thought necessary for *rendering the union entire and total (ibid.)*. It is conceivable that exclusive sexual fidelity is one of those pseudo virtues which *stupify the understanding and harden the heart, obscure the fancy and sour the temper* (E270). Such fidelity as is involved in marriage must be mutual, if the friendship is to be between equals, as Hume implies that it must be. Earlier in the same essay he opposes polygamy because *this sovereignty of the male is a real usurpation, and destroys that nearness of rank, not to say equality, which nature has established between the sexes. We are by nature their lovers, their friends, their patrons: would we willingly exchange such endearing appellations for the barbarous title of master and tyrant?* (LMP109).

But even in monogamous marriage, on Hume's account of it, the males have however regretfully, made such an exchange, since they demand more chastity than they give -- perhaps because they give that monetary 'patronage' which Hume sees as the male's province. Hume is not explicit concerning the standards of chastity applicable to males, but is content to say that their obligations *bear nearly the same proportion to the obligations of women as the obligations of the law of nations do to the law of nature* (T573). This is a dangerous comparison, if Hume believes a friendship between equals to be the basis of a marriage. He says that *the morality of princes has the same extent, yet it has not the same force as that of private persons, and may lawfully be transgressed for a more trivial motive* (T568). Males then have an obligation to be as chaste as women, but are, like princes, more readily forgiven, excused for lapses. This accords badly with Hume's proper evaluation of the importance of friendship in marriage,

and its incompatibility with male sovereignty. That "entire and total union" which he takes as the telos of marriage would seem to be possible only if whatever restrictions there are on sexual freedom be mutual.

I think Hume was aware of these tensions in his account of what marriage demands. He himself never risked it, preferring close, non-tyrannical (if also sometimes patronizing) relations with women, where the requirements of love and friendship could take precedence over the eugenic and social considerations which provide the rationale for marriage between chaste females and less chaste males. His reference to fidelity, in his treatment of the natural virtues, at T603, occurs in a list of valuable things and what precedes fidelity on that list is friendship. He himself seems to have opted for a version of that, foregoing the satisfactions and costs of "the appetite for generation".

The artifice of marriage with acceptance of a double standard is, then, not a case where artifice completes nature, but one where there is a direct conflict between the asymmetric sexual fidelity it requires and that more natural mutual fidelity of lovers and friends on which marriage supposedly subsists. Had Hume followed out the implications of his account he might have seen that the passions which need correction are not the sexual inclinations of either the female or the male but the proprietorial passions of parents, especially those of the male parent. The need for female chastity arises, on Hume's account, only because of the male's greater willingness to care for children who are thought to be biologically his own. Friendship between husband and wife is sacrificed to cater to that. For the cautious jealous natural virtue of male "kindness to children" to get expression, females must cultivate the counter-to-natural virtue of chastity. Yet on Hume's own account of "mine and thine," it is a purely conventional matter, changeable at public will, what counts

as "mine," for anything not an internal quality of mind or *advantage of body* (T487). One's own children then ought to be those society deems to be one's own special responsibility. Hume does not see this, but in effect assumes that only one of his five ways of determining ownership, namely accession, is to be used for deciding which children are "one's own". (Accession is the principle which gives us *the fruits of our gardens and the offspring of our cattle* (T509).) There is no reason, in principle, why first possession, occupation, prescription or succession should not determine which children are treated as "belonging to" a particular adult. If the eugenic considerations Hume cites (E208) support a prohibition on incest, then it may be socially useful or economical to allocate the care of a given child to adults within the prohibited degree of affinity, but this still would not select as "father" the biological male parent rather than, say, the mother's brother. There may be ways of determining which child is one's own which allow the virtue of care of one's "own" children to coexist with the great good of friendship between a man and woman, and with the virtue of mutual fidelity to such friendship and love. Hume, if he did not draw these implications,⁹ at least laid out the important considerations with unequalled clarity. His failure to suggest any reforms may stem from his pessimism, from a conviction that the best care for children cannot be combined with the best form of love between men and women. Until we have a case of their being so combined, in some proven superior artifice, we cannot say that Hume was wrong.¹⁰

I have argued that Hume's account of chastity shows it to be a highly atypical artificial virtue, not a *conspicuous instance* (T570) of the principles he insisted on in his account of the main artificial virtues. It is atypical in that it conflicts with natural tendencies, and is not shown to be "absolutely necessary". It is also

atypical in that not only does its presence give new occasion for the display of natural virtues, but also it is needed for Hume's version of the male virtue of kindness to children to find its proper objects. Unless females have the artificial virtue of chastity, males cannot have the natural virtue of being *indulgent fathers* (T606). It is atypical in that it involves not a self-correcting passion, but the correction of the sexual appetite by other passions. It is also atypical in that its possession and value in some women depends not on its possession by all women, but on the non-possession of it by some of them. This last point of difference, and unclarity in Hume's account, is also of importance for more of Hume's philosophy than his ethics. It points to a pervasive lack of clarity concerning constancy in one life, in action and experience, and constancy in the general *course of nature in human action* (T403). Both in his account of the custom on which causal inference is based and in his account of the particular constancies of motivation on which the punisher relies (T410-412), unanswered questions arise concerning the relation of constancy in one life to constancy at the interpersonal level, within a population, where one person's experiences may supplement another's, one person's strengths compensate for another's failings. For these theoretical reasons, as well as for its demonstration of Hume's remarkable degree of social self-consciousness, of his recognition of the hard core of sexism, the brief chapter "Of Chastity and Modesty" deserves our close attention, and our admiration.

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1. Abbreviations used in references to Hume's works are as follows:

T: Treatise of Human Nature, ed., Selby Bigge, Oxford, 1888; reprinted 1949.

E: Enquiries, ed., Selby Bigge and Nidditch,

18.

Oxford, 1975.

LMP: Essays, Literary, Moral and Political,
London n.d.

2. Leviathan, Ch. 13.
3. I have discussed this in "Secular Faith". Forthcoming, Canadian Journal of Philosophy.
4. Bernard Mandeville, The Fable of the Bees, Remark H.
5. See Mossner, Life of David Hume, and Hume, "My Own Life," second paragraph.
6. Mandeville, ibid., Remark C.
7. Hume, in his essay "Of Polygamy and Divorces," notes that marriage takes different forms in different cultures and conditions, and that *In Tonquin it is usual for sailors, when the ship comes in to harbour, to marry for the season and, notwithstanding this precarious engagement, they are assumed, it is said, of the strictest fidelity to their bed, as well as in the whole management of their affairs, from those temporary spouses.* (LMP107).
8. I have discussed the details of Hume's account of this self-correction in "Hume on Heaps and Bundles," forthcoming in American Philosophical Quarterly.
9. The centrality to Hume's philosophy of the natural family, namely children and their common biological parents, is explored in my "Helping Hume to Compleat the Union," forthcoming in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research.
10. I am indebted to William Charron for extremely helpful comments on the first version of this paper, read at the Seventh Hume Conference, Banff Springs, September, 1978. In particular I was helped by his comments to see how a male virtue depends on an artificial female one, on Hume's account. I was also provoked, by his emphasis on Hume's definition of a convention as requiring a "sense of common interest," to consider whether the artifice Hume describes does serve female interests as well as male ones. Clearly it does serve the interests females have in shared care of "their" children, and serves the a-temporal interest they have in institutions ensuring that children (and so themselves when children) be cared for. But just as clearly it also goes against an interest of theirs insofar as it subjects them to male sovereignty, and is against everyone's interests insofar as it subverts true love and friendship. None of Hume's artifices serve the

interests of all those involved equally well, despite his claim (E190) that conventions arise only between those roughly equal in power to make their resentments felt. Just as he believes that it is better for all people, including younger sons, and the poor, that there be rules of inheritance and property, although some benefit much more than others from the details of these rules, so he believed that both men and women had a common, if unequal, interest in the institution of monogamous marriage between the chaste woman and a less chaste man. Charron's questions also led me to look more closely at the central place Hume assigns to friendship in marriage, and to the rationale which that might generate for fidelity even in childless marriages.